



**TESTIMONY OF Sebago Clean Waters IN SUPPORT OF  
LD 395, An Act to Restore Access to Federal Laws Beneficial to the Wabanaki  
Nations, and  
LD 785, An Act to Advance Self-determination for Wabanaki Nations**

**To:** Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary  
**From:** Karen Young, Partnership Director, Sebago Clean Waters, 8 Depot Street, Suite 4, Bridgton, ME 03909

**Re:** Support for LD 395, An Act to Restore Access to Federal Laws Beneficial to the Wabanaki Nations, and LD 785, An Act to Advance Self-determination for Wabanaki Nations

My name is Karen Young and I am the Partnership Director of the Sebago Clean Waters collaborative. I am submitting this written testimony to urge your support of both LD395 and LD785.

Sebago Clean Waters is a collaborative of conservation organizations working to sustain and enhance clean water and healthy forests in the Sebago Lake watershed to support thriving human and ecological communities. Our collaborative came together in 2017 around a shared goal of conserving 25% of the Sebago watershed forests that naturally purify the water in Sebago Lake, the drinking water supply for one in six Mainers. These forests also support our local economy, outdoor recreation, healthy fisheries and wildlife habitat, climate resilience, clean air, community well-being and so much more.

The Wabanaki Tribes (Penobscot Nation, Passamaquoddy Tribes, Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians, and Mi'kmaq Nation) have lived in the geographic area now called Maine for millennia, living in close relationship with the land, waters and ecological communities and protecting those for the well-being of future generations. However, since the passage of the Maine Indian Claims Settlement Act and the Maine Implementing Act, these sovereign nations have been denied the right to regulate land use and natural resources on their own land and have been denied access to federal policy and funding that would support their land care and communities. Wabanaki Nations are the only US federally-recognized Tribes that are burdened with this layer of state control.

SCW believes that when Wabanaki homelands are returned to their care, our lands, waters, and ecological and human (native and non-native) communities all benefit. However, unless these tribal nations have full sovereignty, their caretaking cannot be fully realized. Full recognized sovereignty is critical for the Wabanaki Tribes in Maine to participate meaningfully in natural resource management decisions and caretaking. Together, LD 785 and LD 395 take significant steps to support Wabanaki self-governance and caretaking of land and people which will benefit Wabanaki and non-native communities alike.

On behalf of Sebago Clean Waters, I strongly encourage you to support both LD395 and LD785 because Wabanaki self-determination is foundational to Wabanaki caretaking of lands and waters toward a sustainable future for all Maine people. Thank you for your consideration.